

# **Federal Non-NOAA Offices: Steps to Access the NOAA Social Science Services Contract Vehicle**

## **1. Establish an Interagency Agreement and Government Estimate**

You will need to work with the NOAA Coastal Services Center on developing an interagency agreement (IAG) so that the Center can receive your funds to cover the contracted work. NOAA requires a specific format, so it is important to work closely with the Center from the beginning, and if your agency allows it, use the template the Center will provide. In the IAG, you will need to specify the amount of money you will transfer to the Center that fiscal year, so it is important to reasonably estimate the cost of the work you are requiring under the contract. The Center will provide you with a government estimate form to help you in this calculation. Getting an IAG approved normally takes six to nine months, so you need to plan accordingly.

## **2. Prepare a Statement of Work**

You will need to prepare a statement of work and government estimate using the template provided by the Center. Technical assistance with social science practices is available for developing your statement of work. When you prepare your statement of work, make sure you also include evaluation criteria. Once you finalize both, you will need to send them to the Center.

The NOAA Coastal Services Center will prepare a CRequest using your funds that have been transferred to the Center through the IAG. The Center will submit the statement of work and government estimate to the contracting officer (CO). The CO will finalize the statement of work and send it to both contractors on the overall contract. Several days after receipt of the statement of work, the Center will schedule a pre-proposal conference call with you and the two contractors to answer any questions the contractors might have on the proposed work.

The contractors will submit their proposals ten business days following receipt of the statement of work. The proposals will be sent to the CO, who will forward them on to you for review.

## **3. Review Contractor Proposals**

You will compile a team that will use the evaluation criteria to review the two proposals. You will need to complete your reviews within seven business days and submit comments and recommendations to the Center, which will prepare a selection memo for the CO based on the review. Center staff members are available to help you review the proposals.

The CO will review the selection memo, and assuming there are no questions or concerns, will award the order to the contractor.

#### **4. Serve as Task Lead to Oversee Contracted Work**

You will then act as task lead and oversee the work performed by the contractor, ensuring deliverables are timely and of high quality. You will work closely with the Center, which serves as the contracting officer's representative on work performed under this contract. You will track progress reports and deliverables through the NOAA Coastal Services Center's Task Order Management Information System (TOMIS).

#### **FAQs**

*What happens if the actual cost of the task work is higher than the government estimate?*

If the cost proposals from both contractors are higher than you estimated, you have several options. If you believe the costs are reasonable and in line with what you requested, you can add additional money to the contract. This would require amending the IAG to add additional money. If additional funds are not available, you can revise the statement of work and reduce the scope of the work required. You will then have to resend the statement of work to both contractors and allow them reasonable time to revise their technical and cost proposals.

*What happens if the actual cost of the task work is lower than the government estimate?*

If the cost proposal from the selected contractor is lower than the estimate (and thus the amount transferred to the NOAA Coastal Services Center through the IAG), then you can put out another task order under the contract with the remaining money.

*How can I reasonably expect to have both proposals reviewed in seven business days?*

The technical proposal is short—no more than ten pages. Because the two contractors went through an extensive competitive process to be selected, they do not need to resubmit their qualifications or expertise in the task order proposals. They only need to provide their approach for addressing the tasks under the statement of work and providing the deliverables. They do not need to provide resumes of their staff members who will work on the task unless the resumes were not provided in their original proposal.

*What is the advantage of TOMIS?*

TOMIS, or the Task Order Management Information System, provides the ability to manage more tasks efficiently by tracking contractor deliverables, providing feedback to contractors on their performance, maintaining records of dates, and allowing better planning of upcoming work. You will be assigned as the task lead within TOMIS and will be able to assign reviewers, review deliverables yourself, track reviewer comments, and evaluate the contractor at the end of the task.